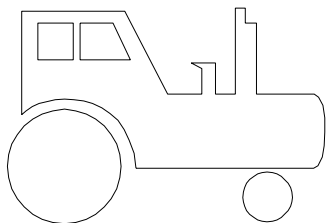




## Replacing Hay with Grain



**“Spread any major changes in a feeding program over a period of several days rather than switching abruptly.”**

Floods or other emergencies may cause shortages of conventional roughage feeds. If substitutions in animal rations are necessary, fibrous grains such as oats, barley or ground ear corn may replace part, if not all, of the hay usually fed.

Continue to feed some hay or straw unless you have had experience with high grain feeding. Spread any major changes in a feeding program over a period of several days rather than switching abruptly. Observe animals carefully during the transition.

### Amount of Grain

The following recommended amounts will supply maintenance and growth energy to animals under different conditions. If some hay is fed, the amount of grain can be reduced.

- Barley and oats have about equal feeding value for cattle and sheep.
- Barley or ground ear corn can substitute for hay at the rate of 13 lbs of barley or 14 lbs of ground ear corn per 20 lbs of hay.
- Ground ear corn (or corn and cob-meal) is safer than shelled corn.
- Wheat and milo need added fiber, which can be supplied by dried beet pulp or about 8% to 10% of other cheap fibrous feeds such as chopped or ground straw or seed screenings. This mix will approximate the fiber level in barley or ground ear corn.

This document is IFAS publication DH 608.

Adapted by UF/IFAS from:  
*Document DH-082,*  
*IFAS Disaster Handbook for*  
*Extension Agents* (developed  
by the Cooperative Extension  
Service for the benefit of  
Florida's citizens)

### Feed Management

You will need to provide feed bunks for grain. Pelleting or cubing may help lower feed waste, particularly if the cubes contain some roughage in addition to grain. Pelleting also prevents animals from sorting the feed mix. This is especially important when lower-quality ingredients are used.

Cattle that have not been fed for several days or cattle not accustomed to grain should be fed only 2 to 4 pounds per head the

first day (if only one feeding is possible), or a total of 5 pounds (if they can be fed twice daily). Increase the feed by about 2 pounds daily for large cows. Make further increases slowly. Add hay to the ration as soon as possible. Use roughage with the grain, even if it is of poor quality. Using as little as 3 or 4 pounds of straw will greatly reduce the hazards of feeding grains only.

## Price Relationships

Determine the extent of grain substitution according to local availability and prices. The cheapest feed is not necessarily the best buy. On a nutritional basis, bulky hay costs more to ship than grains. If you must buy and haul hay, pay particular attention to quality. Cheap hay may not be worth the cost of shipping.

